



The eleventh annual National Food Safety Education Month SM will be celebrated this September. This year's theme is "Keep Hands Clean with Good Hygiene."

(Association) is taking part in the month-long awareness campaign to focus attention on the important procedures necessary for proper hand washing.

Here are six important steps to wash your hands properly:

1. **Wet your hands with running water as hot as you can comfortably stand (100°F/38°C)**
2. **Apply soap.**
3. **Vigorously scrub hands and arms for at least 20 seconds.**
4. **Clean under fingernails and between fingers**
5. **Rinse thoroughly under running water.**
6. **Dry hands and arms with a single-use paper towel or warm-air hand dryer.**

Wash hands before starting work and after following any of these activities: Using the restroom; handling raw meat, fish, or poultry; touching your body; sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue; smoking, eating, or drinking; handling chemicals that might affect the safety of the food; taking out trash; clearing tables; or touching anything else that may contaminate hands.

Also remember to:

Clean: Wash food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges, and counter tops.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Experts caution to keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

Cook: Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly. Public health officials advise consumers to refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Refrigerators should be set at 40 degrees F and the freezer at 0 degrees F, and the accuracy of the settings should be checked occasionally with a thermometer.

There are many important steps to take to keep microorganisms from contaminating your food.